

## GENERAL ARTICLE ON THE EYM

### *French EYM*

#### *What is the EYM (Eucharistic Youth Movement)?*

The EYM (Eucharistic Youth Movement) is a Catholic educational movement, present in 56 countries, addressed to young people from 7 to 21 years of age. It proposes educating them and training them humanly and spiritually. In the EYM the young people learn to link their life and their faith on a daily basis. The movement aims at helping young people to grow in humanity and faith in order to become autonomous and fill their place in society and the Church. It proposes means (team life, gatherings, singing, etc...) for them to reconsider what they are living, speak about it and act, in order to orient their lives.

Age groups well suited to the evolution of the young people:

7-10 years old: New Fire.

10-13 years old: Young Witnesses.

12-15 years old: Present-Day Witnesses.

15-18 years old: Hope Team.

18-21 years old: Apostolic Teams.

#### *Reference points for living happily*

"A person who does not know where he comes from cannot know where he is going. The EYM, which counts today over 8000 members, proposes reference points for young people to live happily, in society and in the Church. With the EYM and its thousand adult leaders, a young person has the experience of discernment, to help him build his life, give it meaning, lead him to freedom - the freedom to choose and, later, to commit himself. In the EYM a child can find support and someone who listens to him.

According to their age the young people live team life, with regular meetings and common actions. Every summer they are invited to live in camps or take part in gatherings. In the EYM we hope to form Christians able to open to others, to grow in faith, to commit themselves to the construction of a more fraternal world" (*Marie-Dominique Davel*).

#### *Why the EYM?*

"To help young people know themselves, with their strengths and limits, looking lucidly at the world, discovering what they can do to change it..." (*Gisèle (mother of a family)*).

#### *Being a team with the EYM*

For the EYM each young person is a person gifted with freedom. Standing on his feet and in balance, he is on the road, searching. We would like to accompany him along this road.

By being part of a team (6 to 8 people) he learns to listen better and express himself better. Through games and creativity he learns to express himself, spontaneously join in, tell his friends about the events in his life...

In fact it is not easy to create true team life. The good and the bad aspects mingle. In the course of EYM meetings and summer camps a young person learns community living with its advantages and constraints.

In the EYM, as in society, it is a matter of learning to live together benevolently, accepting differences. We consider this "benevolence" very important. It implies "looking with one's heart"... knowing how to take an interest in others... Learning to act with others and for others... Learning to be responsible within the team...

- *Stephanie, Strasbourg:*

"When I started in the EYM, it was a new experience for me. And then, in the course of the meetings, this step took on a meaning. It's not only a matter of exchanging but of getting at the bottom of things. And so I learnt to know myself better, to discover facets of myself I didn't know..."

- *Magali, 15 years old:*

"I have been a member of the EYM for five years. Before, I was very shy. Finally my mother registered me with the EYM to teach me life in society, to help me come out of my shell. And she certainly succeeded!"

- *Pierre, 18 years old:*

"The Movement made me grow because the others trusted me. Thanks to it I took time to stop and look at my life, my education. It gave me reference points, and tracks to follow to help me in my choices..."

*With the EYM, choosing one's life*

"To seek and find God in all things". Saint Ignatius, the founder of the Jesuits, invites us to unify all the dimensions of our lives (physical, psychological, affective, social, spiritual) and to follow Christ today, trying to open ourselves, to be available and to commit ourselves in daily life. The EYM fits into this commitment.

*V. Décarité:*

"We give particular attention to the indispensable transitions between the different stages in a child's growth".

Beyond zapping:

"For the young people of today, influenced as they are by our consumer society, of "everything immediately", of "zapping" etc... the EYM offers the tools to help them engage in lasting

commitments in time, and to teach them how to make choices. We offer them training in order to accompany them better along their path of Life, just as God guides them along their path of Faith".

*Adeline Reymondet, EYM leader xxx...*

*Helping to make decisions (ES) (Hope Team)*

1. First of all pray: "If there is anything you need, pray for it" (Ph 4:6).

2. Then listen: our body, our heart, our affectivity, our conscience, the events which weave our lives, what other people say to us, what the Gospel and the Church propose. And speak with someone you trust.

3. Then decide: choosing is eliminating. No choice is perfectly clear: but one can't spend one's life humming and hawing. We can only build ourselves through the acts we establish.

4. Keep to your choice: For a tree to bear fruit it must not be constantly transplanted. For a path to guide us, we must not constantly leave it. In spite of all solicitations, we can't do everything or go everywhere. We believe that a person can only blossom fully insofar as he accepts his limitations, with the conviction that the Lord is by his side.

Young Witnesses:

"School, football practice, catechism, dance, music, EYM meetings... Do you find time to breathe with all these multiple activities? When, how and why rest?"

...In the team:

Does God encourage us to stop? When you rest do you involve God in this too?"

*What happens in the EYM*

*Very visual complementary activities:*

Team meetings accompanied by an adult and periodicals by age group. which propose a path to follow during the year.

Reconsidering and team sharing.

Celebrations and sacraments.

The celebration of stages which mark growth in faith.

Meetings of witnesses.

National meetings.

Games, creative and artistic expression.

*Some means:*

Periodicals.

Personal notebooks.

Music albums.

Taking on responsibility.

Personal meeting with an adult.

The prayer of offering and personal prayer.

*Living in music?*

"Accompanied by musical rhythms and EYM songs, 40 young people shared in Albi the place music holds in their lives. "I need music to work", one said. "I'm afraid of silence" another admitted. Between those who unconditionally hated rap and those who can't listen to Mozart without falling asleep, what diversity! The testimony of one of the EYM composers, Camille Devillers, was very remarkable. Beyond musical habits, the stake is high. For music puts us in contact with life; and these young people are bursting with life. When - after the sonorous noise and nuisance - music rings in their hearts, when it allows them to discover and listen to silence, a big step has been taken towards welcoming a

Word, God's Word which calls us to Life, life in abundance!...".  
(Father Xavier Cormary, diocesan chaplain of the EYM (Albi).

*Living summer with the EYM*

These camps fit into the continuity of team life proposed by the EYM in the course of the year. They are about discovering the Eucharist lived and celebrated through camp life, which can welcome young people who wish to discover the EYM proposals.

These camps are an intense holiday moment, a true experience of Christian life. Trekking, visits, walks, excursions, pilgrimages make it possible to discover a region, its inhabitants, its traditions...

Camp life moves around team life (6 or 7 young people with a leader). The team is a privileged place for sharing, for expressing oneself and listening to one another informally. The young people learn thus to live together, in mutual respect. They commit themselves to group life, taking on responsibilities.

The camp is also a Church experience. Living in an EYM camp is building a Christian community (celebrations, community life...) together with the local Church.

Camp is also an experience in meeting God. The young people live a time of prayer (morning offering, evening prayer, personal prayer...) All this invites them to weave a personal relationship with God. Without forgetting the time of discovery of the Word of God. Finally, each camp is also an experience for reconsidering one's life. Thus each young person is invited to propose choices for building himself personally.

*Testimony:*

"I've been in the EYM for seven years. I've been to four camps. For me the camps are like a drug: I can't do without them! This summer I'll be a leader.

For me the camps are a great resource throughout the year, both on a spiritual level and on that of meeting new and different people. It's really terrific.

I'd like to thank the EYM for all it has given me. I've made very precious friendships in these camps. It may seem strange: one meets people for 15 days, and they become your best friends!..."  
(*Stéphane, 18 years old*).

The organizing team is made up of a dozen qualified adult volunteers.

Each camp welcomes about forty children.

*7-10 years old: "New Fire"*

The programme includes: games and workshops, the discovery of a region, team life, times for God.

Some camps last 10 days, others 15. Some are in tents, others in suitable lodgings. Some camps are "mixed", others take in girls. Throughout France.

*10-13 years old: "Young Witnesses"*

The programme includes: A main activity: excursions on foot, by bicycle; artistic expression... evening gatherings, singing, games, walks, trekking, discovery of the region, times of celebration.

There are "boys" camps, "girls" camps and "mixed" camps throughout France.

*12-15 years old: "Present-Day Witnesses"*

Throughout France, camps in tents. From 30 to 42 young people. Mixed or for girls.

The programme includes: learning to live in a group through daily life and proposed activities. Daring to head towards God and intensify one's faith. Ending the year lived in teams with an intense time of relaxation and encounter.

*15-18 years old: "Hope Teams"*

36 young people per camp, in tents.

The programme includes: hikes, work sites, shows and the discovery of a foreign country (Egypt,...). Sharing one's questions, one's ideas as a team. Experiencing means of praying and living one's faith in daily life (times of prayer, personal notebook, accompaniment...)

*18-21 years old: "Apostolic Teams"* (linked with the Ignatian Youth Network, which the Jesuits like)

In France and abroad (Cambodia,...) in tents. About 14 young people per tent...

The programme includes: a life of camps to build together. An important time along the path with Christ (prayers, reconsideration, accompaniment...) Meetings, joyfulness, life, celebrations... discovery of the world of handicapped people.

*Historical note:*

The EYM (Eucharistic Youth Movement) was founded in 1962. Its origins go back to 1844, the date of birth of the *Apostleship of Prayer*. At this time some young Jesuits were called to make the daily offering of their activities through prayer. From 1905, at Pope

Pius X's request, this movement became oriented towards the Eucharist, and the idea of the "Children's Eucharistic Crusade" emerged in 1914. The project took shape in 1916 with three important groups in Brittany, Bordeaux and on the Riviera.

In 1960, during the pilgrimage to Rome of a delegation of the "Eucharistic Crusade of France", Pope John XXIII evoked the "French Eucharistic Movement". The new denomination, "Eucharistic Youth Movement", was approved in 1962 by the assembly of the cardinals and archbishops of France. The "Prayer of the EYM" was composed in 1965 by Father Jean Latapie. In 1970 a national session of leaders was organized in Tours. In 1971 the EYM passed under the direct responsibility of the bishops of France, after being under that of the Society of Jesus. From 1974 the EYM also welcomed secondary school students. In 1990, during the National Meeting in Laval, all the EYM's pedagogical foundations were reworded in function of the world in which young people live. The first national gathering of the Diocesan Leaders was held in Paris in 1992. In 2002 the EYM celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In France. Saint Paul is the patron of the movement.

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